

HISTORY OF BELGIAN CLUB

"The origin of our present Club, its purpose and its' growth".

In 1912, the Belgians, residing in Allouez, mostly late immigrants, and unable to read English, were eager to get hold of some reading in their own language.

Stan Laureys and Con Shears, were some of the ardent book readers, whom had sent for books to Belgium, to minimize the cost, they interchanged their books, and there was formed the idea to form an organization (a library).

The first meeting was called by the above named at the Saloon of Paul Hendrickx, East Itasca Street, Superior, Thirty one men were present, and it was decided to send for books to Belgium, ordering the "Works of Hendrik Consience" the most widely known books in Belgian language, of which we knew the price to be twenty-eight dollars.

Upon arrival of the books in New York, we received notice, that the duties on the books was thirty dollars.

A special meeting was called, everyone registered was present.

The situation was explained, and here was our first setback, six of the 31 registered, refused to help defray the extra expense for the duty and they demanded their original deposit of one dollar each, inflicting an additional cost to the remaining 25, those 6 men were requested to leave the room, where the meeting was held, and the first motion was made and seconded, which read" that neither of those 6 men, shall join the organization at a later date, unless having 100% of the votes of all member, Many have tried to join later, but only one succeeded, 10 years

later.

The organization was called "Nut en Vermaak" (meaning benefit and pleasure) each member was provided with an insignia, a black, yellow and red button (being the Belgian National Colors with the letter N & V) Aug. Cole was elected our first President. Dues were 10¢ a month.

The first year, the bi-monthly meeting of distributing books, was held at the home of Achiel Missini, later the meeting was held at the basement of Jules Eleyenbergs' home. Until 1919, the club had to date 72 members.

At this time there were in Allouez three times as much single men, than married couples. Membership still increased and we saw ourselves badly in need for a place large enough for our meeting. We had already given some comical plays and pantomimes in said large basements but it was too small for the present group.

The officers called a special meeting in June 1919 at the Franklin School, it was suggested there to buy the vacant saloon of Peter Coda at 3831 East St. Croix Street, we subscribed shares of from 5 dollars and not more than 20 dollars for one member, the result: we were oversubscribed that meeting.

The name Nut en Vermaak, was changed and the organization named The Belgian Club. The buttons were omitted and Badges were provided for the members.

For entertainment, the hall was open for business (selling beer and pop) on Saturday nights and Sundays, to play different games as cards pieren, dart games, bowling etc.. First Saturday of every month a dance for Members and families was held.

Bylaws were printed in bookform, including dues record.

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The clubrooms were brought to many good uses, a singing group of 22 voices practiced every week, a dramatic group active in winter months, Civic instructions were given to candidates applying for their citizenship papers, classes previously held at the home of Con Shears, because many immigrants from Belgium arrived at that time, from 12 to 18 residents from Allouez received their papers at each term of the court.

The clubrooms were also used to house the newly formed Pegion Club, whose membership in 1923 was 57 members.

A second difficulty was encountered at a later meeting, when a motion was made and seconded, for the club to buy a dance organ to be obtained in Norway, Michigan and dances to be given every Saturday night. Failing in three successive meetings to gain a majority votes, a group of members undertook to build a hall, organized, and bought said organ, said place was called the Organ Hall, which made a big success the first two years, later the organization ran in financial difficulty, but instead of letting the building going on the auction block, and being all members of Belgian nationality involved, it was suggested at a meeting of the Belgian Club, in 1927, to appoint 7 men of each of the Belgian Club, the Pegion Club, and the Organ Hall to work out an agreement, a chairman was choosen, and after several meetings of the Committee of 21 a solution was found, satisfactory to all.

The Belgian Club took over the debts of the Organ Hall, promised to pay off the stockholders in full, and the present hall became the new home of the Belgian Club, in less than 4 years, the debts were all paid off, the membership at that time was 130. Burning of the paid-off shares was followed and closed with a festival.

The following have served as President of the Belgian Club:

August Cole,

Paul Hendrickx,

Con Shears,

Emil De Schryver,

Emil Hendrickx,

John Gotelaere,

Arthur Laverge,

Peter De Sitter,

Gustaaf Maert,

Achiel Missini,

Nestor Joos,

Camil De Clerck,

Gaston Vergauwen,

N. Liebaert,

James Ensworth,

Manley Bowser.

Donald Amys

Thomas Liebaert

Meeting January 18. 28.

Opened at 8. P. M.
50 Members present.

Election of officers.
Following officers are elected

Honore Doncker.	President
Ernest Goss.	Vice President
Abiel Jaques.	Secretary
Frank Vercaumen.	Treasurer
Napoleon Rousseau.	AM. Treasurer
Just Calluraert.	Trustee

Motion made and second that
the Organ Hall shall be sold
to the Belgian Club for the
sum of 1680 Dollars. (Sixteen
hundred and Eighty) ~~in other
words for 75 percent. off the
face value~~ providing the
Belgian Club agrees to pay
off all share holders as soon
as there is money enough in
the treasury to whom ever wants
there money ^(at said rate) and also providing
any member who awaits his time
his share shall be paid at
full value. Motion carried.
Meeting closed. 10 ⁴⁰/₀₀ P. M.

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As spoken of the meeting.

Van Johnson 4 P 28

Frank Vermeer

Edw. Vercauteren

Geo. Callaway

Frank Van Dine

Joe Midway

Cornel Albers

Frank De Wolf

Emil Peters

Denis Del Boerman

Peter Lammert

Coen Landman

Thijs De Groot

Theunis Van Rensen

Cornel De Boek

Thijs Albers

Edw. Lammert

Paul Hendricks

Geo. Lammert

Edw. Lammert

Edw. Lammert

Meeting Closed. 11 P M